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INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
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RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 3025
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0841
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0715
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 1291
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN LIFTS REQUIREMENT FOR FOREIGNERS TO
STAY IN HOTELS

- [1](#)1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.
- [1](#)2. (SBU) The Head of the Department for Registration of Foreign Citizens at Turkmenistan's State Service of Registration of Foreign Citizens told an Embassy employee on November 20 that the government has lifted its ban requiring all foreign visitors to stay in hotels, rather than allowing them to stay in rented apartments or with private families. From now on, foreigners may rent apartments, as long as apartment owners are registered and pay taxes on their rental income. This new policy also applies to single males, who previously have been subject to special (negative) law enforcement attention -- and accusations of engaging in prostitution if they were found in apartments or private dwellings.
- [1](#)3. (SBU) The former policy also posed a problem for the Embassy during the recent visit of Secretary Bodman. Migration officials closely scrutinized the flight crew and were uncomfortable with the idea that these men, here without family, would be staying in rented apartments (no hotel rooms were available at the time). It took some explaining by the Embassy to get the flight crew through immigration.
- [1](#)4. (SBU) COMMENT: The ban has come up in practically every discussion with foreign businessmen, and it was a significant quality of life issue for foreigners in the business community. The decision may well have been a matter of necessity: with only limited hotel space in Ashgabat and elsewhere in Turkmenistan, the growing number of foreign businessmen and foreign government delegations flocking to Turkmenistan were facing declining availability. This decision definitely is a step toward making Turkmenistan a more attractive place for businessmen to invest and live, and post hopes that it is a sign of more changes to come. END COMMENT.
CURRAN